"At Tank No. 11"

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The Black Cat

MAY 1900

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The Tarantula.*

BY ANNA McCLURE SHOLL.

THE late afternoon sun flung lengthy shadows along the crowded city street. On one side the tall buildings were bathed in a deep red glow; in the semi-obscurity of the other the hurrying throngs of people seemed like dream phantoms in the mellow, dusty light.

Alone amid the crowd and bustle there stood quietly on a corner, apparently waiting for a car, a young woman of unusual appearance. To Stephen Klendenning, whose attention was attracted by the slender figure, she could not have created a stronger impression of solitude — of isolation — had she been Millet's "Shepherdess," alone in a far-off field. Strangeness surrounded her as an aura — yet he could not at once tell in what it consisted. She was conventionally gowned in a dark cloth suit of tailor cut, relieved only by a vest of creamy lace. Her velvet hat was as unobtrusive as her gown. The face beneath it was of unusual beauty, though not of a type to appeal to the rank and file of those who were hurrying by. She had the Burne-Jones contour, the virginal figure, the long, sweet curve of the cheek-bone

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from ear to chin, the sensitive, clear-cut mouth, the far-sighted, wistful eyes. As in the Burne-Jones women, there was a sense of strangeness about her, blended in Klendenning's mind with a sense of unreasoning fear. She actually inspired him with terror, and as he drew nearer to her, he perceived that his unusual sensations had sprung from a fearful cause. He saw, half-hidden among the folds of the lace vest, the hairy outline of a great tarantula. If he had seen the animal sprawled across the face of the Sistine Madonna he would have been less shocked. The old sick terror of his boyhood sent the blood to his heart, blended with a sense of outrage that the Thing should be upon her. He knew that he must remove the creature, but how to accomplish what to most men would be a trifling, if disagreeable, act? To him it was well-nigh a sundering of soul and body. Struggling with his repulsion an instant, Stephen's desire to save the girl from shock got the better of his cowardice, and drawing out his handkerchief he approached her. He feared now, lest she should become aware of the hideous presence before he could remove it.

She checked him.

"I appreciate your chivalry," she said in a quiet tone, "but I am perfectly aware of the presence of the spider. I thought I had covered it completely with the lace."

She readjusted some folds, and Klendenning saw a terrible crawling underneath, a convulsion of hairy limbs — then a receding darkness — then only a deep shadow in the creamy meshes.

She looked up. Their eyes met. The astonished terror in Klendenning's met no response in hers — only an acquiescent sadness.

"I thank you again," she said.

He bowed He could say nothing. He thought her insane, if he thought at all. When she had left, he wondered if the episode had really taken place, or whether it had been an hallucination — a return of one of those horrible nightmares of childhood, in which a monstrous spider enthroned itself as the King of Terrors. From earliest infancy his fear of spiders had been intense, unreasonable, esoteric. Accounted a courageous, even foolhardy, boy in all adventures common to boyish enterprise, he betrayed in the presence of a spider a terror unworthy of an hysterical girl. As he grew older he had learned to disguise this birth-antipathy to

some degree, and took pains to display his remarkable physical courage in other ways.

But now the old horror seemed to return with redoubled strength. His adventure haunted him for months afterward. So ugly and fantastic, so vivid was the impression, that he never saw a jabot of lace on a woman's dress without an instinctive look for a dark shadow somewhere in its folds. Even the Burne-Jones women in the picture galleries suggested a horror that took shape as an invisible spider, hidden somewhere in the folds of their wonderful drapery.

In the second winter after the spider episode, Klendenning was invited to dine at the house of a friend, a woman noted in artistic and literary circles for her ability to gather about her unusual types of aristocracy. One met at her house those whose peculiarities were the result of generations of cultivation, rather than of natural, unguided growth. Stephen found the majority of the guests gathered in the drawing-room unknown to him, and knew that, with the exception of the woman whom he was to take in to dinner, they would probably remain so, it being a rule of the hostess never to introduce her guests.

He was wondering with whom he was foreordained to spend three hours in conversation, when he saw, seated alone, the young woman who for months had been the centre of a fantastic memory — the wearer of the Tarantula. In evening dress she was even more beautiful than Stephen's memory of her. Her gown of misty brown gauze was cut to show her delicate, but perfectly formed neck and shoulders. At her breast were some large purple violets. No other ornament was visible, but a sense of fear and strangeness chilled Klendenning as a breath from the tomb. He knew, or rather, felt, that under those abundant chiffon ruffles a dark shadow lurked. The girl herself bore about her the atmosphere of isolation. Among the brightly dressed, nonchalant women, she seemed a lovely alien, under some spell of strangeness and melancholy. There was no touch of hauteur in her manner — rather an indescribable humility.

Klendenning said to his hostess:

"Will you tell me who your very beautiful, very strange guest is?"

"I thought you would find her!" was the reply, accompanied by a little smile. "You are always attracted to strange, unhappy, far-off souls. She is Eleanor Maitland, and you are to take her in to dinner."

The sudden change in Stephen's face must have shown itself — the old whiteness that used to shame him among his playmates — for his hostess asked quickly: "Have you any objection?"

"I think I have told you," he said, "of my constitutional horror of spiders?"

"You have met before, then — or some one has told you?"

"We have met before — on a street corner."

"And you saw — Something?"

"Yes, I saw — It."

Her usual light, careless manner dropped from the hostess, and she said earnestly:

"Klendenning, if you only knew, you would be pitiful, and — and — the creature is hidden."

"Is she crazy?"

"No, poor heart! better, perhaps, if she were. Klendenning, as you are a knight chivalrous, don't refuse to take that child in to dinner to-night. I had such difficulty in getting her here at all! There is no other man who can give her the pleasure you can — who can appreciate her as you can."

These well-deserved words of flattery would probably have had no effect, but Stephen had turned to look again at Miss Maitland, and the deep melancholy on her beautiful face touched him. Her eyes, wide and wistful, seemed to look beyond the scene before her. He again faced his hostess: "Please take me to her!"

"Thank you," she said. "It is worthy of you, Klendenning."

When he had actually committed himself, the old horror at once took possession of him. He imagined the worst. The hideous spider, hidden in the chiffon of her dress, might, by some accident, emerge at dinner. If it did, he knew not what insanity of antipathy might come upon him — upon him, a grown man, with a reputation for rare courage and coolness. He opened his lips to recall his words, but the hostess was already leading the way, and Miss Maitland had seen them. There was nothing to do but fol-

low, and in another moment he was bowing before the strange beauty, and they were left together.

"I recognize you, Mr. Klendenning. We have met before," she said.

"And I you, Miss Maitland. It is a surprise — and pleasure — to find that Mrs. Coates is a mutual friend."

Miss Maitland smiled, but her mind seemed to be on a serious subject, and she broke in upon his last words:

"Forgive my abruptness," she said with a certain pleading note in her voice, "but before we are too deep in the conventionalities, Mr. Klendenning, let me say that I understand perfectly what the birth-antipathy to a spider is —"

"I am sorry I have betrayed myself," he interrupted.

"It was no unmanly betrayal — but I know the whiteness. I have seen it often in one who — who is dead. May I say that I appreciate your chivalry in consequence, as I appreciated it at our first meeting? To-night," she added, "It is with me, but It is fastened in the ruffles — beyond escape."

She said the last words painfully, as if forced to speak of some loathsome physical infirmity, and Klendenning knew then that, whatever her reason for carrying a tarantula about her person, she did not do it from mere eccentricity. He was convinced that there was a deeper, stranger, more mysterious cause.

When dinner was announced, and Klendenning gave Miss Maitland his arm, and felt the nearness of her presence, the terror again stole through him, as a spectre through a house in which it claims a past, but he had another fear now — lest she should perceive this ghost and suffer with him, because for him. By a strong effort of will he drove from his mind the haunting horror of the spider, and began a conversation on art, for which an exhibition then taking place afforded the pretext. He found her an appreciative and cultured talker and listener, understanding even his very silences — the entire vocabulary of the unspoken language. Her charm increased upon him every moment, and when from pictures the talk drifted to music, he knew, more from what she left unsaid than from her conversation, that she herself had had the mystic initiation of the artist into its marvels. He found that, like himself, her love for the classics was accompanied by a

passion for wild and melancholy folk-airs, old and strange dance music, cadences that had floated down through many careless generations.

As she spoke she lost the expression of haunting melancholy that seemed habitual, and only once did Klendenning remember that there was Something under the chiffon at her breast. She had leaned back in her chair, had touched for a moment, as she looked down upon them, the violets in her corsage. His eyes rested involuntarily upon the soft gauze ruffles. In the shadows they threw he saw a deeper spot of shadow that moved a little, that seemed to crawl and quiver. For a moment, in a sudden revulsion of feeling, the woman was as repellant to him as the Thing that she carried about her. For a moment only — then the appeal in her eyes conquered. He came back to her a suitor with a plea for pardon in his voice.

Later, when he took leave of her, he begged that he might be permitted to call. At first she hesitated, as might a child not quite sure of the limit of its privileges, and then she said simply that he would be welcome. He returned to Mrs. Coates with impetuous questions, which she would not answer. "Unless you hear Eleanor Maitland's story from her own lips," she said, "you will think her mad. Do you believe," she added, with a little smile, "that her fascination will overcome your horror of spiders? I hope so!"

Two evenings later, Stephen Klendenning sought the old house, in an old-fashioned square, where Eleanor Maitland lived. It looked dark and gaunt and forgotten, though clearly defined in the electric light that fell full upon it. As he ascended the steps he had a sudden horror of the place, as an abode of something more than melancholy thoughts and strange emotions. An impulse to turn back seized him, but the remembrance of a beautiful face held him to his purpose. He would see her at least once again.

Klendenning was shown into what had been a library. The walls were yet lined, from floor to ceiling, with books, books long undisturbed, and as sombre as the heavy black oak tables and tall chairs, fantastically carved. Marble busts on tall pedestals gleamed ghostly from dim corners. It seemed to him like the room of one long dead. Only in one portion of it did he

see a trace of life — of a woman's presence. Near a large fireplace where a cheerful wood fire burned, was an open piano. There were bowls of violets and white roses upon it, and above it hung a noble St. Cecilia of Domenichino. One of the old library chairs was drawn near the fire, but over it, hiding its dusky leather, was flung a voluminous scarf of fantastic coloring — a spot of fierce light in the surrounding gloom. Near the chair was a round table covered with books of modern aspect.

Klendenning awaited Miss Maitland nervously. He found himself watching the shadows, as if a great thing with hairy legs might steal out from them and be close upon him before he could discover its dun presence. Again he regretted that he had come; he was oppressed with a sense of approaching evil — the malady of the spider was again upon him.

As he stood restless, uncertain, by one of the tall oak chairs, Miss Maitland emerged from the shadows, gowned in pure white. Her abundant hair, massed upon her shapely head, was confined by a ribbon that brought out the wonderful blue of her eyes. But upon her breast, extended in a wide, horrible circle, sharp and distinct upon the snowy lawn, was the Tarantula! The legs, no longer doubled up and confined, spread out, hairy and terrible. Klendenning did not see but *felt* the presence of eyes. He knew the great animal could see!

Involuntarily he drew back as his hostess stretched out her hand. Why had she done this terrible thing? Why had she obtruded this sickening barrier between them? Had she no respect for the connate weakness to which he had confessed — no mercy, after all she had said?

As simply as a child might speak, she answered his unspoken questions: "When it is not on me," she said, "it is about the room. I wanted you to know at least where it was among these shadows."

She smiled, but the smile was to Klendenning heartbreaking. On the instant, upon impulse, he asked the question he had meant to keep till he had won her confidence, if that time ever came:

"We are almost strangers, Miss Maitland," he cried, "can you trust me — can you trust me enough to tell me why you carry that awful thing about you?"

"I do trust you," she said in a low voice, "I think I have shown you that by allowing you to come here, but I cannot trust myself to tell you now — I don't think I can trust myself to talk at all. Must we talk? Will you not play to me instead — for a little while? Mrs. Coates has told me that you are a musician by nature and the grace of God!"

Miss Maitland smiled as she spoke the last words, on which she lingered a little, and seated herself in the chair by the fire, as though certain that Klendenning would comply. In this she was right, and her visitor was certainly one of those on whom the divine gift has been bestowed. Though designed for the law, he had received the best musical education that money could procure, to which his passion for music had almost compelled him, despite his father's wishes.

He went at once to the piano, and with his hands upon the keys looked a moment at the picture before him. Miss Maitland sat in the soft firelight, holding a black-feathered fan between her face and the glow. The Tarantula had left her breast, and was crawling lazily downward toward her knee. Stephen watched the Thing, fascinated. He wondered if she would allow It to leave her — if she would become absorbed in the music and forget. She became aware of his silence and turned to him.

"What shall I play?" he asked.

"Do you know the last movement of Weber's sonata in E minor?" she replied.

"The Tarentalla movement?" The surprise in his voice again challenged her.

"The Tarentella music, when I am in this mood, is like healing to me," she said. "I love its wild and melancholy phases, with the alternate gaiety — as wild and sometimes as melancholy."

Klendenning began the last movement of the sonata, and gave himself up to its influence. As he played the music, as it has seldom been played, he watched Eleanor Maitland. She sat motionless, her beautiful face, in the shadow of the great fan, lit with some strange thought, her dress rosy-white in the glow of the burning logs. Upon her knee, in sharp outline, lay the great spider of Apulia, as motionless as his mistress. In the wilder passages of the music, Klendenning noticed a quivering of the ex-

tended legs, but as he passed into the melancholy phase this ceased, and the animal seemed a part of the white gown, a hideous embroidery made by cunning fingers, guided by a distracted brain.

When the sonata was finished, he passed without comment to the Tarantella from Auber's "Muette de Portici." Conversation would have been impossible. They were together with the Spider, and the world was shut out. Klendenning's heart was torn with conflicting emotions that found most congenial outlet in the wild and haunting music of the Tarantula dances, with their abrupt transitions, delirious movement, bizarre gaiety and profound sadness. He played on and on, while Eleanor listened as one enchanted and the great Spider lay motionless.

At the close of a movement of singular wildness, Miss Maitland held up her hand with an entreating gesture.

"You have put so much of yourself into the music," she said, "that you must be weary. Come and sit opposite to me. Perhaps — perhaps — now I can speak."

He drew a chair opposite to her, but found himself watching the Tarantula as if it were a secret enemy, plotting diabolical mischief. In those curved, tense legs there seemed the power to leap and spring. He wondered if the creature felt his antipathy and was biding its time to revenge itself.

"Perhaps now I can speak," she repeated, with a certain wistfulness in her voice.

"Do not speak unless you wish to," he said.

"I do wish it," she said slowly, "for I know that, unlike the majority, you will not think me mad. You have put your *soul* into that music, and I know you understand what a soul can suffer!"

They were silent for a few moments, and then, with a certain effort, Miss Maitland began to speak:

"My mother died in my infancy. I was the second child and daughter. My sister was seven years older than I. Even as a little girl, they tell me, she was very beautiful, with an indefinable grace and charm of manner. She had, as far as I could see, but one characteristic that disturbed the harmony and peace of her nature — she had a birth-antipathy to spiders that amounted

almost to insanity. The sight of one would produce a physical sickness, and she suffered a nervous shock out of all proportion to the cause. In all other respects she was perfectly free from morbidity or nervousness.

"As I grew into childhood, there sprang up between us a passionate attachment. I looked up to her as to a little Queen-mother, and she regarded me at once as her little sister and her baby. We rarely quarrelled and were, as a rule, inseparable. Our father idolized us both.

"As the years went on, Elise grew into as sweet and fair a maidenhood as was ever pictured. She began to treat me more as a little girl, but with a winsomeness that left my pride untouched. Since she had entered into her new dignities I regarded her as my own Princess, to be loved and adored with a certain state. But I did not want others to love her too much. I was fiercely jealous of her friends. It was when she was eighteen, and about to make her *début* in society that something — diabolical — happened."

Miss Maitland had grown as white as her gown. Her distress was so intense that Klendenning begged her not to go on.

"But I must go on. About this time my father, who had quite a passion for studying the habits of insects, had secreted in his room a huge tarantula, which had been sent him by a friend, from Apulia. Knowing that I had no fear of spiders, he allowed me to see the creature, but he cautioned me that on no account was I to tell Elise of its presence in the house. He scarcely needed my promise, I thought. I was passionately fond of Elise. But the next day. Oh, that next day!

"I had expected to go with her to a *matinée*, had dreamed of the pleasure for a week, had set the whole desire of my stormy heart upon it — for I always went to extremes in joy or pain. At the last minute a young man who was in love with Elise appeared at the house after a six months' absence in the West. When he had gone, Elise came to my nursery, looking flushed and happy. She put her arms about me and told me that he was going with her instead, because he could only be in town a few days. She said, in her pretty, pleading voice, that I should go wherever I wished with her, next week, to make up for my disappointment. She drew me close to her and kissed me.

"I jerked myself from her arms and ran and hid myself. Jealousy and bitter disappointment made a little raging demon of me. I hated Elise. I hated him. I had but one thought — to revenge myself — and I thought of the tarantula. How can I tell you the rest? I went to my father's laboratory, took the box that held the spider, and stole to the room where Elise sat at her desk, absorbed and happy. I let the animal escape onto her dress, and then said, 'Look, Elise!'

"She went into madness and she never emerged. Within the year she died, after an illness that had hideous characteristics. I found her gone when I came out of the long illness into which I had been thrown by the sight of her sufferings — by the realization of what I had done. I found myself literally the murderer of my sister. I had killed her in her youth, in her beauty, in her young joy. My father never forgave me — or, at least, he never saw me nor spoke to me again, if he could avoid it. After his death, which happened in my fourteenth year, I resolved upon my everlasting punishment. I had killed Elise on the threshold of life and love. I resolved that I would cut myself off from life and love also. What I had deprived her of, I would never know. I would isolate myself by means of the creature that had unsettled her reason and sent her to her death, that I might have before me a perpetual reminder of my crime — of the killing hate that the crime stood for. I had myself no horror of spiders — the punishment would lie in the barrier that a great spider would put between me and that world of youth and gaiety upon which Elise was just about to enter.

"My friends and guardians thought me mad when I secured my first tarantula and kept it about me, but they had little authority, my own act had alienated them, and so they preferred to drop away and leave me to myself, all but my father's sister, who shares this home with me now. That is all. Do you think, Mr. Klendenning, that you will ever care to come to me again?"

The humiliation in her voice seemed more than Stephen Klendenning could bear. He had an impulse to go over to her, to take her hand, to plead as a suitor might for her friendship — but the fear of the Spider was too great upon him. He hated himself for his cowardice, yet, because he was a coward in this one thing,

he could not speak the words that rose to his lips: "Hate brought the Tarantula to you; only Love can take it away." Instead he framed the cold, conventional sentence:

"If you will permit me to come it will be at once my pleasure and my privilege."

Eleanor Maitland sighed a little wearily. She seemed to Stephen like one waiting a long delayed message from God.

In the weeks that followed they were often together, and when they were not the thought of Eleanor in her mystic isolation was rarely absent from Stephen's mind, shut out from the world and its interests, from everything but that ideal world of the poets and musicians which was both her solace and her pain. He avoided at first all poems that dwelt upon love, upon the simple, natural lives of happy folk, but later, when his passion of love for Eleanor grew in strength, he turned instinctively to the music and the poems that could interpret his feeling.

Yet his love for her was not altogether triumphant, though she seemed to take a wistful happiness in his impassioned themes — it struggled continually with his antipathy for the great Spider. Familiar as he now was with the sight of it, its horror still lingered with him and checked the words of love that sprang to his lips. His physical consciousness of the repulsive creature overcame the spiritual attraction that was drawing him nearer and nearer to its owner.

The struggle was a long one, but love conquered at last. They were together one winter evening. He had been playing to her the wonderful "Frühlingsrauschen" of Sinding — Spring music full of passion, of coming wonder. When he had finished he rose, in response to an irresistible impulse, and went over to her. Something in his face must have told her what he was about to say, for she also rose and put out a protesting hand.

"Eleanor," he cried, "I love you! Nothing can come between us."

As his arms were outstretched to take her, the Tarantula-devil seemed aware of his approach, for it reared, and the hairy limbs quivered in a sort of excitement. But he scarcely noticed it — seven demons in spider shape could not have kept him from her then. But she — she herself drew back in a kind of horror:

"Stephen, I cannot."

The utter misery in her voice emboldened Klendenning. He thought that she would yield.

"Eleanor, I love you — you love me. Say that you love me, sweet, and let me take you out into God's sunlight, away from this horror. You have expiated your sin long ago — you have suffered enough. Let this agony end now, my beloved!"

Never did greater agony look out from more beautiful human eyes.

"No, Stephen, my expiation is only about to begin. Elise was just entering into love when I killed her. I am just entering into love, Stephen — O Stephen, I never dreamed that any one would come to me across this barrier — you must go back — you must go back! What have I to do with love? I forfeited love long ago!"

She began to sob, tearless sobs that seemed to cause her physical agony — sobs more piteous than a rain of tears. Klendenning went over and knelt beside her where she had sunk upon the divan. He put his arms about her and drew her passionately to him, whispering the mad things that lovers say — the words of the divine unreason.

He scarcely knew that the Tarantula had bitten him, though he had felt the clinging of something soft upon his hand, and then a dart like fire through his veins.

But Eleanor had seen, and had torn the dreadful Spider from him, and her cry of terror told him what had happened. They both started to their feet and the spider quivered upon the floor, stunned, apparently, by the violence with which the girl had flung it down.

"The bite is poisonous," she cried, "and it bit you in hate. O Stephen, is this the return I give you for your love?"

"My love is stronger than its hate, Eleanor, it will overcome the poison."

She raised his hand to her lips, putting them over the wound.

"You would draw the poison from me, beloved?" he cried. "When you love me enough you will put the poison from yourself!"

. . . . . .

The sickness from the Tarantula's bite was sharp, but short, and Klendenning let Miss Maitland know nothing of it. He did not seek her again for many weeks. He desired to test her love — not to gratify a masculine instinct — but he felt that if she only loved enough the Spider would become repellant to her. He waited anxiously for a psychical change as subtle as the most delicate chemical transmutation. Would the power of Love overcome the power of the Tarantula?

At the end of the bitter March, Miss Maitland sent Klendenning a note, in which she said that she was about to accompany her aunt, who had not been well, to a watering-place. She said nothing of her feelings, and did not ask Stephen to come to her, but he felt that he must seek her that very night. He resolved, as once before, that he would cross a chasm of hell to reach her — that he would make one supreme appeal to her in the name of Love.

He found her alone in the great library, seated before the fire. Near her upon the floor was the Tarantula. He came in unannounced, and before she was aware of his presence he had time to see how wan her face was. She seemed lost in troubled thought. The struggle was not yet over.

"Eleanor!"

She looked up. For a moment her eyes shone with a wonderful light. He could find no word to say to her, but bowed over her hand and kissed it.

"Stephen," she said simply, "I am glad that you have come. Will you sit down and talk to me?"

"No, dear," he answered, "there is nothing I can put into words. May I play to you?"

"Yes, but — but not the Tarantula music."

"No, dear, not that."

Had his hour of triumphant love come at last? Klendenning trembled as at the approach of an overwhelming joy. For a moment his fingers could not find the keys. Then love swept through him as the very spirit of genius. He began to play the simplest music of the heart, passing into deeper and more passionate melody, from passion to passion more ideal, more spiritual, as in a triumphal progress of love. He played as he had never

played before — as he might never play again. He put into that music the whole of his life — the whole of a deathless love.

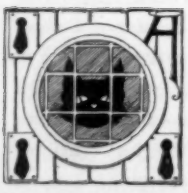
As he played he watched the face of Eleanor. Emotion after emotion swept over it, as waves of light sweep onward toward the dawn. Would they stand at last together, in the sweet peace of that new day?

He had forgotten the Tarantula, but some powerful influence drew his eyes from the sweet face to the fearful Spider. It had crawled upon her knee, but she was unaware of its presence. Yet the creature seemed to Klendenning at this moment not only self-conscious, but struggling to express its malignity — it seemed to be about to spring. Stephen felt convinced that the cord of sympathy attaching it to its mistress had been severed at last — that it was now in the full exercise of its savage and virulent nature. He rose quietly, went to Eleanor's side and threw his handkerchief over the creature. She watched him in silence as he raised the window and threw the Tarantula out upon the still lingering snow, in which he knew the exotic spider could exist but a very short time.

When Stephen returned, Eleanor had risen. Upon her face was a new light, the realization of a great deliverance. She went to him in silence, and in silence they clung together. The quiet night was all about them like a benison. They were alone with their perfect love.

David and Goliath.*

BY ELLIS MEREDITH.



PENITENTIARY, as it exists in the imagination, is not an attractive place. Its site is not romantic, and it is bleak and bare and in keeping with its surrroundings. But there happens to be a real penitentiary, located in one of the most beautiful spots on earth, and though a penitentiary is not usually regarded as a hopeful place for romances of a refined and striking character, yet this particular penitentiary has had no lack of facts very much stranger than fiction. Some ten years ago there was a ghost story written about it, which necessitated the services of two assistant secretaries in the governor's office. Then there was the case of Charley McCoy, whose poor little mother spent her life and her substance, to the last hour and the last dime, in trying to procure a pardon. There is the curious psychologic problem of Tony Wood, the boy murderer, and the singular case of Hackley, the man-eater. Hackley's case comes up every time there is a new appointment to the board of pardons, for he asserts that, crazed by cold and hunger, he ate of the dead bodies of men whom he found lost in the snow, while the evidence for the state shows that, in all human probability, he killed his companions, rather than share with them the secret of the whereabouts of the richest gold mine in the West. Then there is Kentucky Belle, in whose bloated and hideous countenance it is now impossible to discern any trace of the beauty that made her famous and infamous in half a dozen states.

There is plenty of material for romance, both in the inmates of this grim jail, and in the wild cañon, with its towering mountains rising high over the flag-staff that surmounts one of the turrets. The warden, John Hoyt, looks like the ideal sheriff. His massive frame is in harmony with gray walls and mountains, and the men

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who have come to know him well have a great depth of regard, as well as respect, for John Hoyt.

With all this embarrassment of the riches of romance, the visitor to this state prison would hardly have chosen Convict Number 411 as a hero. Except his great stature and splendid shoulders, which would have made him an ideal model for an ebon statue of Hercules, there was nothing about him to attract a second glance. Goliath was about sixty years old when he went to "the pen." He was one of the few slaves who regarded the Emancipation Proclamation with feelings akin to disgust. The war had proved the ruin of his "fambly," the Culpeppers of Georgia, and had thrown Goliath on the world with but few ideas of his own, and no ways and means committee to suggest others. After various vicissitudes, terminating in a wide acquaintance with county jails all over the country, Goliath drifted West, and hired out as a cook in a hotel. As a cook, if Goliath had been a patentable article, he would have been widely advertised as "equalled by few and excelled by none." The American House achieved an enviable fame during the reign of Goliath, and the bar-tender has never ceased lamenting his forcible removal before he had imparted the secret of mint juleps concocted according to a receipt handed down from generation to generation in the Culpepper family. Fate, however, intervened, and when certain bits of jewelry, including some diamonds, were found among the few poor belongings of Goliath, though he insisted on his innocence, and loudly protested that "it was some ob dem mizzable, yallah, crap-shootin' dinin'-room niggahs dat done it," the evidence was too strong. In view of his past jail record, Goliath was given the full extent of the law.

His jail experience had taught Goliath that the ability to sing a song, tell a story and mix a drink, to say nothing of his culinary skill, made him a favored and not unwelcome character with jailers and wardens. Hoyt was no exception.

"Goliath," he has said regretfully, on more than one occasion, "If this state knew a good thing when it's got hold of it, you and me would be sent here for life."

And Goliath would answer with a grin, "Nebba mine, Marse Hoyt. I reckon my term las' mose as long as you-alls, an I dun knows nuff 'bout politics tu git back."

The advent of a new prisoner is not a matter of much interest in a penitentiary, but when Number 623 was "sent up," Warden Hoyt was moved to pity. The boy was handsome and gentlemanly, but appeared stunned and half-insensible as he stood looking out of the window of the long, bare room where prisoners are first received. "What in time are you bringing the kid here for?" he said in a voice which he vainly attempted to render *sotto voce*, "You'd ought to take him on to the Reformatory."

The deputy who had acted as escort answered curtly, "Oh, he ain't such a lamb as he looks. It's a manslaughter case, an' but for his havin' plenty of money to git a good lawyer, an' bein' such a young one to look at, he'd a got twenty years, 'stead of five."

"But he's sick; he ought to be in the hospital right now," objected the warden, who has a pride in keeping up the health record of his institution. "What was it all about, anyhow?"

"He's a tenderfoot," said the deputy, "an' he undertook to buck the tiger. The game was stacked on him, and when he found it out he didn't have the sense to quit, an' they got to shootin'—he was hit pretty bad himself—an' you know the rest. Soapy Smith got killed, an' the kid's here."

"They ought to have given him a public banquet and a medal," growled the warden.

"For killin' Soapy, you mean?" said the deputy. "Well, they couldn't quite do that, but it's a light sentence, and it'll probably be commuted, if he behaves, an' I 'low he will. If he had any pull he'd ought to git a pardon in about three year. I don't think he'll go fer to make you no trouble."

"I don't know about that," Hoyt said, looking the boy over slowly. He still stood by the window at the other end of the room, quite oblivious to the conversation going on about him. "There are men that commit crimes without being what I call criminals. They don't take to the 'pen' at all. Then there's natural, born criminals, that don't get no further than picking pockets; they haven't the nerve to be big criminals, but they don't want to be decent or honest. Take one of them old hands, and I wouldn't ask no better prisoners. They come and go, and get religion every time, and don't give no trouble, but they never reform. Prisoners' Aid Societies can't touch 'em, not in a thou-

sand years. But take one of these men that think's it's a disgrace to go to jail, and he's different. Just wearing the stripes, and having his hair cut takes away all the self-respect he's got left. That kind's always raising the devil. That chap there will be trying suicide within six weeks. It's queer about them tenderfeet. Seems like gamblin' gets them every time."

"Oh, de rich man gamble, an' he fell," came in an indescribable wail from some subterranean region. "Listen," said Hoyt. "It's Goliath singing. He's a bird, he is!" The high, mournful voice went on with its unconscious commentary on the new-comer, repeating the same words, and then dropping into a cheerful, not to say rollicking, melody:

> "Oh, de rich man gamble, an' he fell,
> An' he want to go to heaben;
> But he gotter go to hell,
> Dere ain't no hiding place down dah.
> Oh, I went fo' de rock, fo' to hide mah face,
> But de rock cried out, No hidin' place."

The voice went on, as its owner came nearer, and the door opened to admit a woolly head, still singing,

> "Dere ain't no hiding place, —

say, Marse Hoyt, dey ain't no mo' m'lasses fo' to mek no gingerbread — Oh, 'scuse me; I wasn't awah ye had comp'ny."

The prisoner looked at Goliath intently. His slender hands were closed convulsively, and the sweat stood out on his forehead. He did not look more than twenty-one or two, and his jet black hair made the pallor of his face more ghastly by contrast.

"Uncle," he said faintly, "could you give me a drink?" and then he fell forward quite unconscious.

Goliath picked him up like a child, and turned to the deputy savagely. "What you-all been a-doin' to him?" he asked. "He ain't no common, po' white trash, dat's allus trackin' to an' f'um you' ole jailses. He'm a Southun gemman, he is! He dun call me 'uncle,' jus' lak dere ain't nuver been no wah!"

"There, Goliath," said Hoyt, kindly, "if he's a Southern gentleman one of your mint juleps might bring him to. Just go stir one up, or you might as well make it three."

"Yes, Marse Hoyt. Reckon a aignogg would be bettah fo' him jes' now dan de yudder, but I git 'em d'reckly."

That was the beginning of the friendship between Goliath and Number 623. At first Number 623 was a good deal of care to the warden. He was sick in mind and body, and the doctor's prescriptions were of no avail. He kept entirely away from the other convicts, and on account of his weakness Hoyt gave him odd jobs that kept him more or less under his own eye, or that of Goliath, whose love for him was something beautiful to behold. Sometimes in the evening Goliath's voice could be heard in the weird plantation melodies that made up his repertoire, and at such times it was known that he had received permission to sing to Number 623. He went by his number to all the remainder of the inmates, but to Goliath he was "Marse David," or "Davy."

The second year of Number 623's imprisonment was wearing to a close, and Goliah's term was within four months of its conclusion when the *Maine* with her gallant crew went to the bottom. There was the wildest excitement in the prison, and war was declared there long before the President's call for troops. Convicts who expected to get out very soon spoke eagerly of their chances to get to the front, and if Hoyt had not mercifully allowed a reasonable number of "Extra Editions" to make their way into the prison he would have had insurrection and a little war of his own. Number 623, with only three years to serve, grew troublesome again.

"Now, honey chile," argued Goliath, "you-all doan' wanter git into no wah. I'se been thu' one, an' I tole you, pintedly, dere ain't no sassfaction in wah. It's jes' a mizzable 'fliction sent by de Almighty caze we'se so wicked. It jes' spile all de craps, an' sojers t'arin' down de fences, an' heaps of hosses gittin' killed, an' you-all shootin' at we-all, an' mose uvverbody goin' 'way, an' nobody nuver comin' back no mo'. I ain't got no use fo' wah. 'Spose you' Uncle uver been doin' time hyar, ef he dun stay on de Culpeppah plantation? 'Sides dat, Marse Davis, I doan' reckon dere gwine be no wah. Dat ar k'yentry over yander ain't gwine to t'ink she kin lick you-all when she kyarnt lick Cuby. An' den ag'in, Marse David, ef dish yer ra-ally is a wah, it pintedly gotter las' three yeah; dey allus does, an' yo' be out by dat time."

But Number 623 refused to be comforted. "Think of it!" he said, walking up and down the long kitchen. "Just think of it!

The Townsends have been in all the wars there've been in this country, since before the French and Indian war. My father was with Lee, and my grandfather was at Lundy's Lane, and my great-grandfather was one of Marion's men, and when it comes my time I'm just a common jailbird. I reckon it's enough to drive a man to desperation!"

He dropped down on a chair, and buried his face on his arms on the kitchen table where Goliath was peeling potatoes. Goliath's dark face was sorely troubled, and as he knit his heavy forehead he began singing softly:

"Fo' de Lawd am wid us,
An' He has been wid us,
An' He says He will be wid us
Tu de a-end."

"Don't sing that, Uncle Goliath," said a choking voice from under the striped sleeves. "I reckon the Lord forgets all about convicts."

Goliath passed his hand gently over the bristling black head.

"Dere now, Marse Davy, doan' tek on so," he said, tenderly.

Half an hour passed with no sound save the splash of the potatoes as they fell into the pan of water at Goliath's right hand. Finally Goliath said slowly, "Marse Davy?"

"Yes, Uncle," came in a muffled voice.

"Honey, what's a substitoot?"

The boy lifted his face with a dim expression of surprise.

"Why, a substitute's a man that takes the place of another man. But you couldn't go as a substitute for me, Uncle Goliath. They won't take anybody over forty. And I want to go myself."

"I wa'n't thinkin' of goin', Marse Davy," said Goliath. "I was thinkin' of *stayin'*. My time's up de las' ob June, an' I could stay, an' do you' time jes' as well as not, ef dey'd let yo' go tu de wah. I'se a heap mo' use hyar dan yo' is. Marse Hoyt say I dun sabe mo' dan my bo'd an' wages on de cookin'. An' I ain't no use outside. Dey ain't no place fo' a po' old cullud man, 'thout no fambly, an' no home, 'specially when he's been tu de pen. I reckon I'se a heap sight better off hyar."

The boy's face lit up for a moment, then he said dejectedly, "Oh, Uncle Goliath, I couldn't let you do that for me, noways."

But Goliath was stubborn. He didn't often have an idea, and he realized the gravity of the occasion.

"Now, looky hyar, chile," he said solemnly, "Doan' yo' go fo' to cross me, caze I'se pow'ful bad niggah when I'se crossed. You-all jes' ask Marse Hoyt fo' de ink an' papah an' write de Guvernah. Yo' tell him all dat stuff 'bout you' daddy, and you' grandaddy, an' you' gret-grandaddy. Yo' tell him how yo' is a Townsend fum Vuhginny, an' 'bout you' ma bein' f'um Cuby, an' den tell him how yo' sholy is going to wah, an' gwine come back and finish out you' time, ef dar is any. An' tell him while yo' is on de parole you' uncle gwine to stay right hyar, whah he can lay he finger on him any time. Yo' tell him I is gwine tu stay fo' you' substitoot."

Very doubtfully Number 623 wrote his letter to the Governor, enclosing a letter from the warden telling something of his conduct, and a good deal of the faithfulness and ability of Goliath. There were seemingly endless delays. The attorney-general and the pardon board and the lawyer for the defence and the prosecuting attorney and the judge before whom the case of Number 623 was tried, all had to be consulted. Warden Hoyt spoke sympathizingly to the prisoner, and Goliath cheered and scolded alternately.

"You-all is a nice lookin' sojer!" he said, contemptuously surveying the gaunt figure and haggard face. "How yo' reckon yo' gwine tu fight ef yo' doan' eat nuffin? Yo' reckon de Guvernah gwine send ary sech a ole crow-bait down dah fo' to lick dem Spianyards? You' Uncle Golia's shadder dun look mo' lak a sojer dan yo' is," and thus, by dint of threats and cajoling, Number 623 was prevailed upon to eat a little of the food set before him.

It was the third of July when the Governor's special car was pulled up on the sliding near the prison, and His Excellency entered the gray stone gateway. "How's everything, Hoyt?" he said. "All right? That's good. If all the institutions told the same story it wouldn't be so much like work to be Governor. And now I can't stay long, but what's this remarkable talk about Number 623? And who is Goliath?"

Hoyt told the story briefly, and then sent for Number 623. In spite of his cropped hair and striped clothes the convict looked every inch a man when he came into the room. The Governor noticed that he bowed with the natural grace of the born and bred gentle-

man. He looked at him sharply through his glasses, and said abruptly, "The name under which you were tried is not your true name. I don't blame you for concealing it then, but you must tell me now, if I am to help you. What is your right name?"

"David Fairfax Townsend," answered the convict. "The Warden knew from my letters. He's got my watch and things and can show who — my folks are. He told me he wouldn't say anything to any one. I'm the first one to bring disgrace on my family, Governor, and I'd rather die than have them know. I can't ask you to pardon me — there isn't any excuse for a man to be a fool — but if you could give me a parole till the war is over you wouldn't have any cause to regret it, Sir, and I give you the honor of a Southern gentleman," he glanced down at his clothes and shuddered, then threw back his head proudly, "of a Southern gentleman, to return and complete my sentence."

"But how about this — ah — this friend of yours, who wants to act as your substitute and make a kind of vicarious atonement for you?" queried the Governor.

The young fellow's face softened. "The warden is fond of him, and I reckon to make it up to him when I come back."

"But if you didn't come back?" said the Governor.

"If I am killed my folks in Virginia will take care of him for my sake. "I don't ask pardon," he said desperately. "I can't expect the law to forget what I must always remember, but if you could give a parole I'd feel like a man again. It isn't justice but mercy that I ask!"

There was a sound of shuffling feet in the hallway and a clinking of glasses. The door was pushed open, and Goliath entered, bearing a tray. There was not a ripple of surprise on the warden's face as he said, with utter mendacity, "I told Goliath you'd heard of his juleps, Governor, and would like to try one this hot day."

The Governor emptied his glass slowly; the nectar of the gods is not an everyday beverage. "So you are Goliath?" he said.

"Yes, Marse," answered Goliath proudly. "I is Goliath Culpeppah, ob de Culpeppah fambly ob Geawgia."

"And you want to be a substitute for this — young man?"

"Yes, Marse; de Townsends is secont cousions ob de Culpeppahs. Ob co'se I gwine do anyting to 'blige a Townsend.

An' 'deed, Marse Guvernah, I doan' mine stayin' hyar nary mite. Marse Hoyt, he a heap mo' lak de old Cunnel dan anybody I dun foun' up Norf. He say I sabe a pile in the cookin', an' I gwine be a heap sabiner dan I is been. Oh, Marse Guvernah, I ain't nuffin but a po' ole no-count niggah, but I'se willin' to stay hyar ten yeahs ef yo' let him go. His folks doan' know whah' he am now, but ef he doan' go home fo' to 'list fo' de wah, dey gwine fine out, an' it brek his mammy's heart — an' dey-all is kin to we-all!"

The Governor swung round and filled out a blank, which he gave to Number 623, and then turned to Goliath. "How would you like to cook for me, Goliath?" he said. "I don't eat near so much as 'Marse Hoyt,' but I put on lots more style."

"I'll come, Marse Guvernah, jes' soon as I git quit wid Marse David's time. I'se done wisht dat Marse Hoyt go fer to put on mo' style, fo' I fo'gits how to make salad an' cook a tarrapin. I'se proud fo' to be axed, an' I comes jes' as soon as I gits froo hyar."

"Well, come right now then," said the Governor, brusquely, conscious of the tense figure and white face back of him.

"Governor," gasped the boy, "It's a pardon!"

"Yes," said the Governor, even more sharply, for there seemed to be something wrong with his eye-glasses, "It's the custom to pardon somebody in this State on the Fourth. You'll have to wait until the one o'clock train to-night."

Goliath's mighty chest was heaving, and the tears running down his face. "Marse Guvernah, Marse Guvernah, I gwine to cook fo' yo' fo' uver an' uver," he said, then throwing his arms about David's neck he burst out, "Didn't I done tole yo' dat

> "De Lawd am wid us,
> An' He has been wid us,
> An He *say* He will be wid us
> Tu de a-end."

They passed into the hall together. Hoyt looked at the scenery through the open door as if he hadn't been looking at it for fifteen or twenty years, and the Governor wiped his glasses.

One Chance in a Million.*

BY HAROLD KINSABBY.

AS the traveller, turning his back to the setting sun, descends into Paradise Valley, there spreads before him a brilliant checker-board of orchard and vineyard, beyond which an extensive and picturesque group of red buildings gleams still ruddier, and upon one corner of the roof of the principal structure a house of glass glistens like a huge jewel in the sunset glow. Approaching nearer, the buildings are seen to be surrounded by parks and gardens, where men and women are amusing themselves with golf and baseball, croquet and tennis, under the watchful eyes of discreet attendants.

Here is the home of many a human wreck, cast upon the shores of mental oblivion in the strenuous struggle of life — the man who, during the gold fever of '49, found fortune to lose all else, he who sacrificed everything and gained nothing, and hundreds of others, men and women, who have proved unequal to the strain on nerve and brain imposed by the stress of an unkindly Fate.

Walking apart from these groups may be seen a white-haired man of melancholy mien, who pauses occasionally and makes a peculiar motion with his hands, as if in the act of cutting with an imaginary pocket knife. This man is the sole occupant of the glass room on the roof, which is always brilliantly lighted, blazing even at night with electric lamps. At intervals of a few months, he is visited by two ladies, who seem extremely solicitous for his welfare, and twice a year a noted alienist from Paris comes to study this interesting case. Here is the story of this peculiar patient:

Any one with a sweet tooth and a good memory will recall the curious little pear-shaped sweetmeats which were so popular eighteen years ago and then suddenly dropped out of sight.

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Everyone bought and talked of the new candy, which was small, apple-green and translucent, with a curious red streak in the core. It was not only very delicious to the taste, but produced a strange effect of mental and physical stimulation, of buoyancy — almost of intoxication. Totally different from the action of any known drug, however, and especially from alcohol, it had absolutely no deleterious reaction, but on the contrary seemed to exercise a tonic influence upon the nervous system. Lovedrops, as they were called, were carried in school-children's satchels, sold on trains, taken as a "pick-me-up" by men, ordered by society ladies for their "functions" and consumed by shop-girls by the ton.

The enormous profits from their sales were not divided among shareholders, but all went to one man, Walter H. Torreton, the inventor and manufacturer, who, starting in a small way, had constantly increased his business and incidentally the fame of the Lake city where he lived. There he bought the handsomest estate on Park Avenue and built extensive conservatories, giving much personal attention to a unique species of lily, which had never before been seen, called by him the multi-bloom.

As the fame of Torreton's confectionery spread, other manufacturers put imitations on the market, but without success. Though their candy looked much the same, it wholly lacked the peculiar qualities of the genuine lovedrops, in which analysis had failed to reveal anything more than sugar, a little fruit flavoring and the merest trace of some quite unknown but very volatile essence, which appeared to be located in the red central stripe.

Torreton received large offers for the use of his secret formula, but these he promptly declined, and went on enlarging his business. Then his competitors began a systematic endeavor to steal what they could not buy. Information was lodged with the internal revenue officers that the candy contained alcohol, but this was disproved by the government analysis, which, however, utterly failed to show the nature of the characteristic ingredient. Torreton often found spy-glasses and cameras levelled upon his laboratory windows from buildings across the way. Repeated attempts were made to bribe his workmen, but they only served to bring out the fact that no one knew the secret but Torreton himself. Then complaint was brought against him for violating the fire regula-

tions, and among the inspectors who came when an investigation was ordered he recognized a chemist from Chicago. But even this spy, after gaining access to the citadel, and peering and sniffing about the premises, could find no clue but a strange aroma which he could not identify. Some express packages which arrived at the factory were traced back to Amsterdam, where, after a tedious search, it was found that they had been originally shipped across the ocean by Torreton himself, merely as a blind. When it seemed as if persecution and inquisition could go no further, the inventor, one evening on leaving the factory, discovered a small balloon anchored over his laboratory skylight!

Not long after this, a real estate firm, acting, it was surmised, for a foreign syndicate, bought a vacant tract of land on the outskirts, commonly known as Sumach Park. On the high ground in the centre a large brick building was erected and enclosed by a high brick wall like those which give privacy to many English estates. The building itself was surmounted by a glass structure, somewhat like the lantern of a lighthouse, and was the cause of much curiosity. This curiosity was partially gratified eventually, and the story of a foreign syndicate shattered by the following notice, which appeared one evening in all the papers:

> ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS REWARD will be paid by the undersigned to the person who first brings news to his residence on Park Avenue that the electric light has gone out in the cupola of the new Torreton Confectionery Works, in Sumach Park. WALTER H. TORRETON.

As soon as the papers were on the street, men went out of their way to get a look at the new light. There it was, sure enough, and as the darkness gathered it displayed a beautiful green pear, with a red streak in the centre, a gleaming reproduction of the famous candy. It was pronounced a great advertisement, but one scarcely necessary in a locality where the confection itself was already in the mouth of everybody. However, the reward offered was tempting, and not only did every policeman and fireman immediately become a night watchman for the Torreton works, but every man and boy as well who could invent any pretext for being out.

But while thus, in one sense, subjected to closer espionage than ever, Torreton's factory was no longer troubled by the spies of

his rivals, and his business increased even beyond his expectations. Still he labored regularly as ever, and lived with his wife and niece just as quietly, his only extravagance being frequent additions to his greenhouses.

The light in the cupola burned steadily, and the tempting reward seemed destined to remain unclaimed, until one evening more than two years after the completion of the building, when a newsboy lingering late in the endeavor to dispose of an overstock of "extrys" suddenly saw a blurred halo surrounding the green and red beacon. It trembled, grew pale and —

The light went out!

Dropping his papers, the boy took the shortest route to Park Avenue, but soon found he was not alone in the race for the Torreton residence, as he passed men and boys and even women, all silently striving for the promised reward. A watchful and active fireman was the first to arrive in the presence of Mrs. Torreton to claim it, and she, with her niece, who acted as confidential secretary to her uncle at the factory, were in a carriage swinging out of the grounds when the great body of panting messengers arrived.

During the anxious drive to Sumach Park, the girl explained that, rather earlier than usual, her uncle told her he was going to the city and would not return to the works. When she started for home she had noticed that the door to a small inner laboratory vault, in which Mr. Torreton kept his most important chemicals and papers, was open. She had closed and locked it. What connection this incident might have with the extinguishing of the light she could not imagine, yet she felt that something was wrong, as any attempt to enter the building by night would put out the beacon and give an alarm.

Followed by Mrs. Torreton and a policeman from the crowd assembled about the factory, the niece led the way through the building. Although this was four stories high, all the stairways and elevators stopped at the third floor. The private laboratories on the top floor were never entered by any one but Torreton and his niece, who went there daily, drawing themselves up by an ingenious contrivance like a dumb waiter built into the wall and concealed behind a panel in the private secretary's office. To this she now went, and under her direction the others ascended one at

a time to the floor above. The laboratory was in darkness, and the electric light would not work. But as they approached the door of the vault by lantern light, strange noises were heard. Tremblingly the girl worked the combination and released the heavy door. Torreton was there and alive, and without speaking he stumbled blindly toward the light, and then fell unconscious.

Before closing the vault again, the niece looked wonderingly in. Burned matches and paper ashes attracted her attention. They lay on the floor, beneath the electric light bracket. On a shelf lay a note hastily scrawled on a lovedrop wrapper:

> Locked in—suffocating. Secret shall die with me. Have burned the formula. Wife has enough—she shall not be persecuted as I have been. Good-bye.

Beneath this was written:

> A thought has come to me that may save my life: *I shall try to give the alarm by cutting the electric wires and putting out the cupola light.*

He had indeed given the alarm in time to save his life, but his mind was a complete blank. The Torreton lovedrops disappeared from the market, and the light in the cupola of the deserted works has never been relighted. Finally, even the family residence was given to the city for a hospital, but it was not until after the extensive greenhouses had been dismantled and their treasures scattered that it was suggested that they might have held the secret of the famous sweetmeat. That secret, with its possibilities, lies hopelessly buried in the darkened brain of Walter Torreton.

And it is darkness alone that disturbs him now. It was observed from the beginning of the attempts to treat his remarkable case that he displayed the utmost repugnance to darkness, and grew nervous, uneasy and wild as twilight came on. He is happy only in a glare of light, and it was upon the advice of an eminent Parisian specialist that he was finally removed to the beautiful California valley, where he lives, day and night, in a flood of radiance. His mind slipped a cog, the specialist says, which may slip back again, just as a train that has jumped the track may jump back — but it is one chance in a million.

A Deserter.*

BY ALGERNON TASSIN.

A YOUNG woman sat writing by the light of a kerosene lamp. The table was drawn up near the wood fire which flickered on the brick hearth, and gave glimpses of the corners of the room which the lamp light could not reach. The walls and floors were bare, but the boards were shining, and still smelt warmly of a recent scrubbing. The table, three chairs, a cupboard, and a bed were the only furniture. Asleep on the bed lay a little girl. The meager flame from the lamp fell on the young woman's face as she bent over the paper. It was a common enough face, pretty neither in feature nor in coloring, but marked by a certain expression of set amiability that told of a tender effort at kindness. Her hair was brushed tightly back from her forehead, giving to the head its only mark of character, although it showed not so much weakness as lack of significance. She was copying laboriously, on a sheet of foolscap, a letter, which, as several sheets lay around her, had evidently taken much time to compose. At last, with a sigh of accomplishment, she picked up the finished page, and with pen in hand, read over what she had written, pausing here and there to consider a possible correction, or to make additional punctuation. The letter read as follows: —

"To the Secretary of the War Department,
Washington, D. C.

"*Honored Sir:* — I take the liberty of writing you to ask if the War Department know anything about my father, William L. Callahan, who deserted Company K of the 9th Infantry, stationed at Fort Logan, Colorado, in May, 1884. He did not really desert, at least intend to desert, but the case was a very hard one, sir, and I want to bring the particulars to your notice. The last

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of April in that year he got a furlough to come to us out here in Freehold, twenty-five miles from the fort. My mother was very ill with typhoid fever, and he came home to help me with her. In eight days she died, and my little sister was taken ill. We were nursing her, my father all day, and I at night, when his two weeks were up. He did not know what to do; he did not want to leave the little girl just at the brink of death, and he had not got over the shock of mother's loss. There was no way to send word, so he stayed over his time. In four days she was out of danger, and he started at once to join his company. On the way he met the men who were coming to arrest him. There was a fight, and he was shot at, and in self-defense he shot back and wounded a man. He escaped to Findley, a little town in the mountains. He hid there safely for three months, and sent down word by a friend of his. Then he disappeared, and has not been heard from in seven years. I write to you because I understand that there is kept at the War Department a description of all deserters, and trusting that you may know something about him; even to hear that he is in prison for deserting, and resisting arrest, would be a relief to me after all the anxiety of these years. And I thought if you knew the circumstances you would perhaps pardon him or help me to find him. I have one hundred and fifty dollars ($150) saved up to help him out, and to pay his fine if there is any. Please look up his case for me, and pardon my great liberty in addressing you, but I am so worried that I have been driven to writing. Do something to bring him back to us if there is any way.

"Respectfully yours,

"Freehold, Colorado, "ELLEN CALLAHAN.
May 26, 1891."

She addressed the envelope and laid down the pen. Until midnight she sewed upon some calico she was making into a dress for the child. Then, after attending to a few duties in the room adjoining, which served as kitchen and dining room, she blew out the lamp and sat down over the fire, now a glowing bed on the hearth. She was thinking of her father. He had been a kind man to his family, and had always sent them a large part of his

money. He had loved his wife and children, however, rather because they were his own property than from any more personal reason. He liked to think that he had a home, and that there was somebody in it waiting for him. In habit he had not been given to speech or demonstration, and a word with him had all the weight of a command. From her mother Ellen had taken, along with an instinctive respect, an instinctive fear of him; and it was not until the time of her mother's death that she grew to have any more intimate feeling. Her love had been first awakened as they sat silently by her mother's bed, and in the fight for her sister's life. After he went away, and during his long absence, all her woman's imagination had been busy about him. He became an ideal and the one bit of romance that entered into her dull life. Her entire routine was transformed and touched with color by the daily expectation of his return. The future was summed up in one phrase: "When father comes home." As she sat stooped over the fire, thinking of him, she had lost her commonplace air and gained for the moment a certain dignity and pathos. She became the type of the feminine watcher who in all time has listened by the hearth for the step which still delays. At last, rousing herself from her dreamy abstraction, she undressed and went to bed. The little girl sighed with drowsy satisfaction and put up her warm face, and Ellen, folding her arms about her sister, was soon asleep.

In two weeks she began to expect some word from Washington, and from then on she looked twice a day for a letter. Each day brought the old hope and the old disappointment. On the way to and from her school she made the extra mile to the post-office. Her mind so absorbed itself in the one idea that she lived in a fervor, almost an agony, of expectation. She kept the house and the school with the same scrupulous attention, but both had lost all reality to her. At last the regular inquiry met with an answer; in fact, the postmaster was waiting at the door with an official envelope. She took it quietly, though her heart and mind were on the jump. If he expected her to open it and satisfy his curiosity, he was disappointed. She dragged herself wearily home, feeling so weak that she could hardly stand, and clutching the letter violently under her shawl.

After resting some time on the step to get her strength together, she opened the door and went in. The fire, which she had made all ready in the morning to light when she came back, was blazing brightly, and bowed over it sat a man with grizzled hair. He turned as she entered; it was Callahan!

"Father!" cried Ellen, falling into his arms with a burst of hysterical sobbing. He soothed her without a word. "Father," she said, when she could speak, "have you come home for good?"

"No," said Callahan, "I have come to get you and Mary, and take you with me. When I left Findley I made for Chicago, and now I have a home there waiting for you."

"O father!" — Ellen began to weep again — "and I am to keep house for you?"

"Not exactly keep house," he returned slowly; "you see, Ellen — I — of course it seems sudden to you, but you know I have been away so long — I could not live alone, and I have married. She wants you both to come. She sent me for you."

Ellen was quite still. "Oh!" she said at last, "you would not have come if — "

"No," he broke in, "I came as soon as I thought it was safe. I wanted to see you, but I didn't dare take the risk. I am risking a good deal now, but it was safer than writing. Besides, I have changed so." She looked at him. Had he changed? For the first time she saw that he was no longer erect, his hair was grayed, and he wore a beard. "Where is Mary?" he asked. "Has she grown much?"

"She went home from school with another girl; she will be in presently." Ellen was speaking in a dazed voice and with her old timidity. "But, father," she said, "what have you been doing, and why didn't you send some word when you left?"

"Because I didn't dare to," said Callahan. "I stayed there safe enough until the man was dead."

"Dead!" cried Ellen, awestruck.

"Yes. Didn't you know? He died in the hospital. Then I knew the place wasn't safe for me, and I had this chance to get out quietly."

"Dead!" said Ellen again. "O father!"

"I could not help it," he said doggedly. "I didn't mean to shoot him. The other fellow aimed at me, and I struck up the pistol, and it went off and shot him. It was his own fault; they had no call to shoot; I was unarmed. I hid up there until he died, and then I went to Chicago. I didn't dare send you word; they might have hung me or jailed me for life. I stayed in the house for a month. But they haven't found me yet, and now they probably never will. I have been quiet, and I have changed so. Now we can all live in peace for the rest of our lives."

A thought suddenly jogged Ellen's mind and turned her white. "The letter!" she gasped.

"What letter?" asked her father.

"O father!" she cried, "father, I have been so anxious about you, and so lonely all these years. I couldn't stand it any longer. I didn't mean any harm. I thought I could help you if you were in jail. I have been saving up for you. I didn't know the man was dead. So I wrote to ask about you at Washington."

"At Washington," he repeated mechanically. "When?"

"A month ago, and to-day an answer came." She took out the letter. "O father, suppose they have got track of you!"

He tore open the letter and read hastily: —

"MISS ELLEN CALLAHAN,
FREEHOLD, COLORADO.

"*Dear Madam:* — I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, dated May 26, asking for information of your father, William L. Callahan, and to inform you that on the 24th of April, 1884, he received a two weeks' furlough to visit his family; that having overstayed his time, a guard was sent for him; that he resisted arrest, and in the struggle a pistol was accidentally discharged, wounding mortally one of the men; that he escaped, and has since remained in desertion. Acting on information in your letter, the Department has been in correspondence with the postmaster of Findley, Col., and through him it has been learned that Callahan went to Chicago, where he now resides. He will be apprehended and taken to the nearest military post, there to be tried by court-martial for desertion. The War Department

has no power to remove the charge of desertion. This can only be done by act of Congress.

"Very respectfully,

"ROBERT J. HOLMES,

"*Ass't Adjutant-General.*

"Washington, D. C.,
June 27, 1891."

Callahan looked blankly at his daughter; he was trying to take the letter in. His face was gradually hardening. Ellen caught the look in his eyes. "Father!" she called spasmodically, as if to ward off a blow. "O father, don't! I meant it for the best!" Her voice was lost in sobs.

"There, Ellen," he said, "don't take on so. I can't blame you for wanting to see me, can I?" He smoothed her hair to comfort her, but his head dropped dejectedly. "Now I can't go back there," he went on, forming each word with difficulty, as if his mind were working hard to manage the new idea. "I must go somewhere else — and begin all over again."

"Father," said Ellen, "stay and fight it out. You see the letter says 'accidentally.' They wouldn't hang you for that. And I know they'll let you off for deserting if the court martial knows about mother and Mary. Think, father! I will work for you. And I have money. I will go to our congressman, and he will help you if the court martial convicts you. I can pay a lawyer to get you off — I have a hundred and fifty dollars."

"No," he said, "I can't stay here. Give me the money, and I'll go somewhere else and try it again. If I have any luck, I will send for you."

Ellen went to the cupboard and took from its hiding place her little hoard, the sum of seven years' savings. "There, father," she said, "it's for you."

He took the money, and drawing her to him, kissed her awkwardly. "You're a good girl!" he said brokenly. "You're like your mother. I hate to take the money you've worked so hard for, but — "

"No," she repeated with eagerness, "I meant it for you. But — " she went on tremulously — "won't you take us with

you — won't you? I can work for you and nurse you if you are sick — and you know your heart is weak, though the army surgeon never found it out. O father, take us!"

Callahan seemed touched, and reflected silently for a few moments. "I'm afraid to do it," he said. "Don't you see, they would find you were gone, and that would put them on the track?"

"Yes," sobbed Ellen, "I never thought of that."

"Well, cheer up, my girl. I'll see what can be done. There are some things I need badly, and I must find out where it's safest and best for us to go." And kissing the weeping girl he went out quickly.

Ellen returned to the kitchen fire, feeling bewildered and stunned. For seven years she had worked and waited only for this day. Now her father had come — but the future was more uncertain than ever. Then she thought of her little sister. The child would be in presently, and must not find her crying.

Mary soon came in with a hop and a jump, hungrily enquiring for supper, and Ellen arose and busied herself in preparing the meal, thinking how best to break the news of their father's situation to the demonstrative child, who was busy now in the little bedroom.

A sudden sharp knocking caused her to nervously drop a fork and stare helplessly at the outer door. Why had her father stopped to knock?

"Come in," she said, faintly.

A tall man, heavier than Callahan, but looking much as he had appeared seven years ago in his uniform of blue, entered quietly. He was dressed in military attire and wore a corporal's chevrons on his sleeves.

Startling thoughts flashed through the young woman's terrified mind — the long weeks of delay in hearing from the War Department — her father's sudden appearance — this soldier, following on his footsteps! She had called down upon his head the very disaster they both dreaded. The military authorities had tracked him to her door!

She remained silent by the fire as the soldier saluted and enquired if she were not Miss Ellen Callahan. She nodded, feeling

denial to be useless. But a lie rose to her lips at the next question. How could she tell the ruinous truth? She nerved herself to the equivocal answer, "I don't know just where he is now."

"Well," answered the trooper, "I suppose he's where you can get word to him, and that's all I want. Tell him he need not worry about having killed me, if that's what keeps him in hiding!"

"Killed you!" stammered Ellen. "Then you are —"

"I'm Miller, the man that was wounded when he was arrested for deserting, seven years ago. I was in the hospital for weeks, and so was another Miller. He died of typhoid, and somehow they mixed up our names in the report. That suited me, as I was dead sick of the service then. So I deserted myself — bein' as I was considered dead — and loafed a few years. Then I enlisted again in the East, where they didn't know my record. Now my three years' term is up again, and I'm done with the army for sure, but I want to do a good turn for your father."

The words "your father" were the only ones that struck the ears of little Mary, as she came tripping from the bedroom.

"Father!" she cried, looking with rapture at the tall, military figure, the ideal she had always cherished. "Father, you've come home at last!" and she threw herself joyously upon the stalwart soldier, clasping him about the waist.

Before the stolid corporal could extricate himself or make reply — before the elder sister could frame an explanation — Callahan entered abruptly and gazed upon the embarrassed group. He shrank back, his face blanched and his whole frame trembled with horror and dread.

"Jim Miller!" he muttered. "Jim Miller — or his spirit."

The foam gathered on his lips, his features worked convulsively and his hands twitched with frightful tremors. Then a shriek burst through his clenched teeth, echoed by the girls, and he sank in a limp heap upon the floor. The shock had been too great for the weak heart of the deserter.

At Tank Number Eleven.*

FRANK LILLIE POLLOCK.

ITH a great white "11" painted on the side facing the railroad track, the ungainly tank, perched on its trestle, looks out over the most ghastly wilderness in the world — sand and sage brush and distant formless buttes, with the superheated air trembling over it all. There is no station nor siding there, nor anything living except a few horned toads. The nearest human habitation is more than a hundred miles away. The tank was placed there because it was the only point on the road within a day's run where water could be found. No doubt a prehistoric river once flowed that way, but the engineers had to bore over a thousand feet to find its waters.

The only event at Tank No. 11 is when the pumping engine is set to work to refill the reservoir, for as the trains go by between El Paso and Los Angeles, their transient littleness does not seem to break the thirsty desolation.

The man came to Tank No. 11 from across country, late in the afternoon, staggering blindly through the sand. He wore the usual riding costume of the Southwest, though he was on foot, "chaps" and spurs, with a long six-shooter hung at his hip. Thirst torture had made his face something almost unhuman. His horse had fallen exhausted nine miles away, but the rider, with desperate energy, had struggled through to reach the railroad. His eyes were almost closed with inflammation, his face was blackened and caked with sand, his lips had cracked like parched earth and his tongue protruded between them, swollen and dry as leather. In spite of the exertion and the terrific heat, not a drop of perspiration appeared upon his skin; it was days since he had touched liquid.

Through the limpid atmosphere, clarified by perennial drought,

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he had seen for a long time the distant tank, with its little oasis of green which the dripping water had brought forth, and as he toiled nearer and nearer to it, and found that it was not, as he had feared, a mirage, he broke into a weak-kneed run.

There seemed no way of getting at the water, however, as the supporting trestle-work was at least ten feet high, but the man was in no scrupulous mood and, drawing his revolver, he fired into the upper part of the tank. The water spurted out in a long curving jet, and the man stood awkwardly beneath it, holding his sombrero with both hands above his head, filling it and trying to drink from it at the same time. He drank gaspingly till he could drink no more, and then stretched himself luxuriously under the stream and wallowed, clothes and all, in the wet sand. Afterwards he sat on the trestle in the sun and began to steam. He took from his pocket a lump of jerked venison — hard and dry as a bone — soaked it in the spurting water, which now ran with less force, and ate the softened portions. As he returned for another drink he saw something on the ground that made him stare. Where the escaping water soaked into the sand it left a foamy scum, and among its shining bubbles something even brighter glistened.

The man picked it up; his practised eye saw at once that it was a nugget of gold about the size of a pea. He eagerly turned over the wet sand, and yellow specks shone out wherever he looked.

The prehistoric river had left its treasures behind, but, lacking water, they had never been separated from the containing sand. There was water now, however, not much, but enough if used with economy. The prospector half filled the crown of his hat with sand and water and swirled it with a practised though trembling hand, after the manner of a gold pan. As the refuse tilted out a residue of yellow scales glistened in the bottom.

The man, weak and near collapse from the privations of the desert, quietly sat down again with his back to the setting sun, and as he gazed eastward over the treasure-laden hat resting upon his knees, the look in his eyes showed that he saw far beyond the distant line of the horizon.

This golden oasis seemed too good to be true and when the doubt entered his mind he returned to the dwindling stream and worked feverishly, panning out the rich sand. He labored until

dark, when the rumbling of the distant overland express train warned him to desist, and he caught up a stray spike and retired a hundred yards into the desert, where in a few minutes he dug a shallow trench for a hiding place. When the train stopped at the tank he stole up, mingled with the passengers who alighted, and in the buffet car bought some canned provisions, and paid a dollar for a ten-cent tin basin in which to wash out his gold. This boarding of the passenger trains for food he repeated cautiously at intervals.

Much of such rest as he snatched he took in the heat of the day, in the shelter of his dugout, enlarged for that purpose, and there he retreated on the approach of trains, lest his secret be discovered.

On the first morning, he found it necessary to puncture the tank lower down, and discovered a way to climb the trestle to plug up his bullet holes, to economize the water and conceal its escape from the trainmen. For days he lived and worked in feverish dread. Two years of toil and disappointment had weakened his courage so much that he hardly dared hope that he had conquered fortune at last. Yet this was the richest pocket he had ever seen, and his store of dust and nuggets grew rapidly. Two weeks more, even, without interruption, would serve his purpose.

But the awful loneliness, the loneliness of the desert, began to tell upon him in spite of the excitement of his work. He found a strange pleasure in watching trains from his place of concealment, and hearing the voices of the crews, although they left him even more lonely.

He grew bolder as he continued to work successfully without detection, and at night when the trains came, retired only across the track, where the sage brush was now sufficiently thriving to afford shelter for a man lying down. In time he came to sleep there, to be nearer the "chunk, chunk" of the wheels over the rails. Occasionally he would rise when he heard the warning sound to meet the night express. When it slowed down for the tank he would swing up on to the step and walk through the cars, buying cans of food and newspapers from the East. When the engine had taken water and started again, he would drop off in the darkness.

Each day increased his store of gold and brought him nearer

release, but it also increased the lonely, homesick feeling that was born of the desert which surrounded his treasure.

Meanwhile, the oasis, which had started with a patch of green directly under the tank, had spread most wonderfully. Wherever the water touched it, the dead sand of the desert had sprung into life. Rank grass followed his bullet holes around the tank and ran in streaks across the glistening sand.

Early one morning, the great engine "Governor," the largest on the Western continent, drawing a heavy fruit train of refrigerator cars eastward, roared in the distance and finally stopped opposite Tank No. 11. After taking water the bell rang, and the giant king of locomotives began to start the long train. Suddenly it stopped with a jolt, its forward truck plunged downward, burying the nose of the monster in the sand, where a section of the track had sunk, sapped by the insidious overflow of the man's mining operations.

When the wrecking train, called for by telegraph, arrived ten hours later, and the laborers were clearing away the loose sand to get a foundation for jacking up the big engine, a faded sombrero was discovered. Then with more care the crew uncovered the body of a man who had been crushed beneath the locomotive. From the pocket of the blue flannel shirt the workmen took a letter, which they handed to the gang-boss, who passed it up to the conductor. It was written in pencil, but in a bold hand, both the paper and the envelope — addressed to a lady in an Eastern city — having come from the library car of the Overland Express, whose embossed heading it bore:

Overland Express.

AT TANK NO. 11, ARIZONA DESERT, September 17th.

DEAREST GERTRUDE: — You know how dismal the prospect was when you last heard from me. I can remember now that you have never been discouraged through it all, not when the Indians drove us away from the Mexico mine, which we had worked so hard to locate, nor when fate played me those nasty tricks in the north. When the end of the first year came and I seemed as far as ever from success, it was to your sublime confidence that I was indebted for encouragement to hold on. Now I am able to justify that confidence.

Death has been too close for comfort since I wrote you last, but now all is gloriously changed. I can hardly trust myself to tell you what has happened. I have put off writing until success seems sure. It is difficult to believe it myself; it is so much like the story books. I have discovered a marvelous garden in the heart of the Arizona desert, and will bring you a dozen cans of my fruit; golden fruit that will make me the happiest man in the world because it will give me you, my sweetheart, and help me to make you

happy. I have a dozen cans nearly filled already with gold as pure as your heart, and every grain of it has been washed out with a throb of loneliness and longing for you. The awful solitude of the desert that surrounds my little garden oasis would have driven me mad, had it not been for you and the trains. I sleep near the track that I may hear the glad sound of wheels eastward bound toward you. I shall post this on the first overland mail train eastward bound, and follow it in five days more. If all goes well I will surprise you then with the whole story.

With love and impatience, I am faithfully,

LUCIEN.

When the conductor had finished reading the letter there was a shout from some of the idle train hands, who, wandering to a distance from the track, had discovered the man's dugout: "Somebody has been living here — there's a whole row of tin cans, as heavy as lead!"

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